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Young Men's Christian Association of Montreal

FOR RELEASE AFTER 8:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, January 22, 1969.

LACK OF JOBS, BOREDOM ENCOURAGE DRUG-TAKING

Drug-taking will not be checked unless its real hazards are clearly understood by both users and those who try to dissuade them.

"Following the pattern of last year, this summer will also, probably, be active where drugs are concerned, especially in the more affluent communities," says R.G. Rogers, General Secretary of the Montreal YMCA.

Noting that the age at which youngsters start experimenting with drugs has been getting lower for some time, he told the Quebec Camping Association that its use is also growing among adults.

Increased use of drugs has, however, made both young people and adults more aware of the complexity of the gulf that separates them. This in turn has re-emphasized the need for continuing dialogue and frank interchanges.

Youth workers who discover young people using drugs should, above all, remember to 'keep their cool'. Strictly disciplinary action alone, without discussion and explanation, will only drive the practice underground.

"Many young people do not themselves fully realize why they take drugs. Approach them with warmth and understanding. Make it clear you are really interested in their viewpoint. Try to get them to examine and share their reasoning."

The YMCA executive also delivered a blunt warning against trying to shrug off drug-taking as a passing fad.

"In many instances, it is essentially 'escapism', a reaction against the forces of depersonalization or the state of the world, a

symptom of personal problems or an attempt to artificially break out of ones self," he said.

Mr. Rogers suggested that drug-taking received extra impetus last summer, when there was a scarcity of jobs for students.

"This encouraged a number of youthful 'users' to become 'pushers' so they could earn money. Other users, bored with inactivity and frustrated by lack of opportunity to exercise their initiative, provided a ready market."

Mr. Rogers touched on some guidelines for associations that serve youth.

"Educate yourself--young people are very well informed," he urged. "Involve workers in the development of drug policies--simply setting hard and fast rules may create further problems."

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